



Indian Country Extension Commission

Indian Country Extension Development under the Revised
Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program





“I love all the opportunities it provides for children to start learning about accountability, responsibility about being a good role model and a good productive community member... You really see a difference in our youth.”



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Summary of ICEC findings and proposed solutions

The Indian Country Extension Commission (ICEC) was formed in January 2022 to assess the current state of Indian Country Extension (ICE). The work of ICEC focused on two programs; The Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP) and the Tribal Colleges Extension Grant Program, commonly known as “1994 Extension.” These programs pursue Congressionally articulated priorities including advancing plant health and production and plant products; animal health and production and animal products; food safety, nutrition, and health; bioenergy, natural resources, and environment; agriculture systems and technology; and agriculture economics and rural communities. Additionally, they pursue current articulated priorities of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), including creating climate-smart agriculture and forestry; improving nutrition security; building new and better markets; building the workforce for the future; and ensuring diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Bottom line up front:

We are requesting a \$49 million increase in Tribal Extension funding with continuous funding after the initial 4 years of program build up. The \$30 million increase to the FRTEP programs will increase the total number of FRTEP agents: 90 new agents added to the current 35, as well as the addition of 27 new regional specialists with expertise in areas such as water, range, animal science, forestry, youth, Native foods, and Native languages. The regional specialists are needed to engage Tribes not served by either FRTEP agents or 1994 Extension programs. The \$19 million increase for 1994 Extension will enhance and expand their outreach and programming efforts.

ICEC is composed of 17 volunteers with expertise in Native American agriculture, cultural relevance, and extension services delivery. The members and their affiliations are at Exhibit 1.

Summary of ICEC findings:

1. FRTEP is an impactful program limited only by its past and current erratic and uncertain funding.
2. FRTEP started almost 100 years after the County-based Extension programs were established.
3. FRTEP and 1994s funding began at a minimal level.
4. FRTEP’s inadequate funding has not kept up with inflation. The initial requested funding of \$10 million was to serve 239 Tribes, but in 1991 only received \$1.0 million for 15 positions (see appendix table 4). Thirty years later the program has only increased to \$3 million, funding 35 positions serving 32 Tribes. If the original \$10 million had been allocated and increased at the same rate as the \$1 million start-up fund, the program would have had a \$618 million investment instead of the \$72 million over the past 30 years. This equates to a missed investment of \$544 million not accounting for inflation. The lack of growth in the funding and number of agents is the core issue in the ability of FRTEP programs to meet the increased demand for services.

5. Because the bulk of FRTEP and 1994 workers' salaries are supported by the scant federal funds, Tribal Extension programs have difficulty attracting and retaining staff.

6. FRTEP and 1994 programs now reach about 75 of the 574 eligible Federally Recognized Tribes, or approximately 13%. The demand for services from Tribal Nations vastly exceeds the current available resources.

7. The competitive funding is static for FRTEP and the 1994s. As new programs compete and are added, all existing programs in Tribal Nations suffer from further reduced funding. This type of competitive funding is not found in County Extension programs.

8. FRTEP and 1994 programs, despite their erratic and uncertain year-to-year funding, have performed mightily, accomplishing significant and measurable results.

Proposed Solutions: The proposed solutions put forth by ICEC will place these FRTEP and 1994 programs on par with non-Tribal (County) Extension programs and provide an equitable and non-discriminatory path forward. It will be critical that assurances are in place with the Extension directors to keep the flow of funds to the Tribal Extension projects that they support.

- Eliminate the competitive nature of the FRTEP funding and instead use permanent funding similar to County Extension programs. The current 35 FRTEP positions are to be grandfathered in and increased to \$140,000 level per year. The new FRTEP positions are to be allocated based on the formula described on page 9 for all phases.
- Increase funding for both the FRTEP and the 1994 Extension programs to quickly make them equivalent to the non-Tribal Extension programs across the nation. Note that the funding path of each program is separate and should not be seen as a single funding line. Both are critical and need to be supported. The recommended increase in allocations of \$30 million for FRTEP will bring the base number of agents up to a solid foundation of 125. The recommendation of a \$19 million increase in allocation to the 1994s is needed to enhance their outreach and programming efforts. Both increases need to be incorporated into base funding requests starting in year 5 after the initial 4-year \$49M increased funding is expended.
- Increase access to additional programs and reduce or remove the matching requirements on all USDA grants for Tribal Extension.
- Provide flexibility in how program funds can be used in project resources and activities to allow each Tribal agent to meet the continually changing needs of the Tribal communities.



PART 1:

Funding Mechanism for Indian Country Extension

As a result of the first Indian Country Extension Commission meeting via Zoom, several tasks were assigned with findings to be presented to the Commission at the next meeting. This brief memo is intended to provide an outline for follow-on thinking and planning.

One explicit task of the Commission required an estimate of the desired end goal – including the estimated size, geographic scope, and national budget for a new and expanded Federally Recognized Tribal Extension program to increase Tribal Extension agents across the country.

It should be noted that establishing a new Extension office in a Tribal community is demanding work, and results take time just like the first Extension programs in counties over a hundred years ago. This includes an administrative commitment for both the leadership and management of Indian Country Extension programs and the development of a mutual partnership between the land grant institutions and Tribal Nations where the positions are to be located. Most importantly, the overarching purpose for the expansion of this program is to help Tribal Nations to optimally achieve their goals. This means that the Tribes will determine which land-grant institutions can provide the best service, especially where there may be the need for multi-state participation and collaboration. Accordingly, we recommend the budget to support an expanded and flexible program to meet the changing needs of Tribal communities in the future which would be considerate of the following:

1. **Start-up costs.** Funding allocations to launch initial programming, staffing, equipping new offices. Start-up funding should be available for a period of three years.
2. **Office considerations:** It is common that office space for Indian Country Extension may not meet the institutions' standards for occupancy. Tribal offices vary widely but become well-known and host impressive numbers of visitors and educational activities. It is important that negotiations address this need when determining office space.
3. **Phased-in program growth with five proposed phases over a period of 4 years.** The following budget estimate shows year-by-year amounts, including both increasing existing budgets as well as funding new office start-up budgets.
4. **Establishment of operating MOAs with Tribes,** including reimbursement for the costs incurred by the land grant institution and the Tribal Nation.
5. **In the case where a Tribal Nation is served, or will be served, by multiple land grant institutes,** the corresponding memorandums of agreement (MOAs), should reflect all parties involved.

We recommend an increase of \$30 million for the FRTEP program for the initial 4-year investment with continued funding of the existing 35 positions at an increased level. This will add 90 new agent positions (for a total of the 125) and 27 new specialist positions. Approximately 56% (\$16.9 million) of the first 4-year allocation is to be expended in Phases 1 and 2. The remaining 44% (\$13.1 million) will occur in the last two phases. All allocations are to be based on the recommended formula described on page 12.

Phase 1: Increase funding for the 35 existing Indian Country Extension (FRTEP) positions up to the level commensurate with their County Extension peers. Provide approximately \$3M for Tribal relation development and training to the Extension directors for MOA development. Include \$100,000 per year for 4 years for FRTEP professional development conferences. Each new FRTEP program should receive \$30,000 per year for the first three years of the program.

Phase 2: Target establishing **68 new FRTEP offices**, which includes 58 Agents and 10 full-time equivalents (FTEs) Regional Specialists for approximately **\$10M**.

Phase 3: Add **25 FRTEP new offices**, which includes 25 Agents and an additional 10 FTE Regional Specialists; **(\$5.67M)**

Phase 4: Add **7 new FRTEP offices**, which includes 7 Agents and an additional 7 FTE Regional Specialists **(\$2.45M)**.

This totals **\$24.88M** over a **4-year** rollout.

Phase 5: Incorporate the new base funding levels in future budget requests using the USDA Modified Smith-Lever Formula specific for Indian Country Extension.

We recommend an annual budget of approximately \$140,000 for each new FRTEP office and approximately \$200,000 per FTE for Regional Specialists or an equivalent FTE. Below are the details for new position start-up budgets, and funding for area offices/centers/specialists, professional development conferences, and Tribal relation trainings and support for MOA development.

A per-office (\$140K) estimate is based on 1.0 professional FTEs and 1.0 FTE staff. The following factors illustrate why it is not feasible to develop a finite budget:

1. Each of the land grant institution (1862s, 1890s and 1994s), has its own salary and benefit scales. New and existing Tribal Extension educators/agents must be placed into the same employee system of tenure and/or promotion as County Extension professionals. Agent salaries should be equivalent to, or commensurate with, their existing county peers. Similar considerations are needed for staff. Some Tribes require adherence to Tribal pay scales, some allow staffing under university systems. This category needs flexibility to grow, and to accommodate differences between states and needs of Tribes.
2. With all of the new positions, it will be critical to hold an annual professional development

conference each year at an estimated cost of \$100,000 per year.

3. It is estimated that approximately 117 offices can be established in addition to the existing 35. A list of states and estimated numbers of new offices is attached, as well as the number of Federally Recognized Tribes in each state.

4. Extension directors will be asked to develop refined estimates. We recognize that there may be considerable modification of this budget with ensuing discussions. There will be a need to allocate a portion of the anticipated funds to support the work of MOA development and outreach (\$3M). Please note we recommend funding for any new programs be held in abeyance until such time as state Extension directors develop suitable MOAs with Tribes that wish to participate. Further, it is assumed that as successes are witnessed, more Tribes will request to participate.

5. Start-up costs for each new office are conservatively estimated at \$10K per year for each of the 3 years of the new position. Total: \$2.04M in year 1 for 3 years, \$1.08M in year 2 for 3 years, and \$433K in year 3 for 3 years.

6. Planning for the use of Extension Specialists within a region including several Tribes and reservations may be the best configuration for Extension programming and, in some cases, regardless of state lines. An area office may be designed to serve more than one Tribe or Extension program. Ultimately, this may be less than optimal versus a local Extension office, but a necessary step in the evolution of an Extension presence in some communities. Funding for this facet of a new Indian Country Extension rollout would be \$2M in year 2, \$2.06M in year 3 and \$1.4M in year 4. Distribution of the funding to the states for Federally Recognized Tribal Extension work should be as simple as possible.

7. **PLEASE NOTE:** Once this program arrives at the end of Phase 4; a formula for funds distribution would govern future appropriations (Phase 5). See Part 3 of this document for details.

8. We recommend requiring Extension directors to develop a plan for the number of offices it would be feasible for them to establish over the 3-year period. This could take at least one year, perhaps more in some states.

9. We strongly recommend that the total fund allocation and phase 5 ongoing allocations be adjusted for inflation over time.

Matching requirements: Tribes vary widely on willingness and ability to provide matching funds for



an Extension program they may know little about. While we do not recommend a strict matching requirement, some level of in-kind contribution should be encouraged. By example, there are Indian Country Extension programs that started out in the front seat of a car and 10 years later, have a stand-alone 4-H/Extension office built exclusively for Indian Country Extension work.

Timeline:

PHASE 1: Develop MOA's, budget, university and USDA arrangements, personnel recruiting. Amend/increase budgets for existing programs.

PHASE 2: Continue year 1 activities, establish offices, hire, and staff. Sixty-eight new offices established.

PHASE 3: Continue MOA work. Add 35 new offices.

PHASE 4: Continue MOA work. Add 14 new offices.

PHASE 5: Ongoing appropriated support for existing FRTEP offices per the USDA Modified Smith-Lever Formula Specific to Indian Country Extension. Also governs prospective additional offices post-PHASE 4.



“It gives you some place to go first. If you find a problem, and you don't know where to go, they can be your first call and possibly your last call. But if they can't figure the answer out they will find somebody that can.”



PART 2:

Implementation Requirements for Extension Directors

- Extension Directors are responsible for an extremely diverse programmatic portfolio including Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR); Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences (FCHS); Community Economic Development (CED) and/or 4-H Youth Development. The specific inclusion of Native American programs, where Tribes exist within their state service area, is a critical piece of the land grant mission and encompasses the unique geographic, cultural, and economic challenges of delivering Extension programs in Indian Country. Having a clear understanding of the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Programs (FRTEP) and its vital role it plays in effective Indian Country Extension will enable Extension Director to properly fulfill the Cooperative Extension mission for all citizens of respective states.
- In the provision of Extension education programs, the Extension Director must provide an administrative construct that includes both leadership and management for an extended, ongoing FRTEP program as a component of their land-grant university Extension system.
- This FRTEP expansion will provide funding that enables the Extension Director to hire or promote salaried personnel necessary for handling both the leadership and administrative responsibilities for the delivery and management of Tribal Extension programs.
- A designated Tribal Extension program leader, as with ANR, FCHS, CED and/or 4-H, will hold a key position as part of the Extension administration construct; and with knowledge in each of these program areas.
- Financial management of federal funding to support Indian Country Extension through FRTEP must be included in the Extension administration's operations. This includes placement of Tribal Extension educators/agents into the county-based employee system of tenure and/or promotion.
- As with County Extension operations, developing good business relationships with the Tribal councils of the Native Nations participating in the FRTEP programs is essential and may involve collaborations with other institutes. Thus, Extension Directors would need to invest the appropriate level of time and/or resources necessary to fully develop these relationships, reinforcing the importance of having a designated Tribal Extension program leader.
- Because Indian County Extension programs represent a combination of ANR, FCHS, CED, and 4-H program delivery, the FRTEP Agents/Educators play a critical role in managing the coordination of Extension Specialists and seeking appropriate expertise necessary for successful program delivery, as with County-based programs facilitated by a County Agent/Educator, or Advisor. This commitment by non-FRTEP Extension Specialists to serve Tribes and reservations within their service area is an expectation of their responsibilities in cooperation with the Indian Country Extension program leader.

- Successful expansion of FRTEP requires that cultural competencies be built into Extension programs, including knowledge of Tribes, their history, and their political background. This knowledge will benefit and enhance the Cooperative Extension educational delivery system.



“It makes a big difference to have a Native person with so much knowledge, passion and mastery of the programs delivered. Because she is a community member, a tribal member, and lives here, she understands.”



PART 3:

Recommended Funds and Position Distribution Plan

Upon receipt of the USDA allocation for the revised FRTEP program (see part 1), amendments to the existing 35 FRTEP projects to increase their awards to the full funding rate \$140,000 are required. Following this, call for proposals will be sent out to all land grant institutions requesting new applications that meet the requirements stated below.

Ten percent of the total new allocation will be set aside to assist land grant institutes in the development of Tribal relationships and MOA development. These trainings will be scheduled upon request, and the funds will provide for Tribal relations experts, Tribal personnel reimbursements for cost incurred in the MOA development.

1. Must have a signed MOA or equivalent in place with the Tribe(s) located within the institution's state or in collaboration with other institutes where the Tribes cross state lines on the application.
2. Description of the proposed position (new agent, regional agent, or part FTE of specialist/expert)
3. Application must include land in acres including forests, crops, rangelands and streams, lakes, and ocean access, on-reservation population, and per capita income estimates or poverty levels.
4. Project statement of work
5. Estimated budget should include the \$30,000 per year for three years operation line on new agent request.
6. Multiple applications are allowed per state or region as long as MOAs with all parties are in place.

USDA MODIFIED SMITH-LEVER FORMULA

This USDA Modified Smith-Lever Formula describes the method of funding for the permanent support of the new Indian Country Extension Program. This formula reflects the unique needs of Native Americans resident on their reservations and is similar to that used to support ongoing funding of County Extension programs.

Just like the S-L formula for County Extension programs, the ICE formula will be adjusted every 5 years (funded increases only) on key criterion, and again every 10 years on other key criterion (see below).

COMPONENTS OF THE USDA MODIFIED SMITH-LEVER FORMULA

Specific to Indian Country Extension

1. **EQUITY** between land grant institutions: (10%) of the total \$30M appropriation is shared to each state with federally-recognized Tribes equitably.
2. **LAND BASE** of existing reservation exterior boundaries, irrespective of total amount of allotted, fee, Tribal land ownership within. (20%)
3. **POPULATION** of Tribal citizens resident on the reservation or Tribal jurisdictional area. (30%)
4. **PER CAPITA INCOME** of citizens on the reservation. (35%)
5. **CURRENT SUPPORT** or number of FTEs dedicated to Indian Country Extension servicing the program on the reservation. (5%)

Total New Allocation: \$30 million

10% of the allocation (\$3 million total) to be set aside for program administrative positions for each institution (\$60,000 per state)

Funds for all positions: \$27 million

When ranking applications, use an award numbering system 1 through 5 for each of the four variables listed in table 1. Decision Criteria: Note that the first two variables (Land Acres and Access and On-Nation Population) are to be ranked from highest to lowest while the last two variables (Per Capita Income and Number of Tribal Agents) are to be ranked from lowest value to highest. Example: Land Acres and Access with values greater than 500,000 acres would be assigned a 5 and values under 29,999 would be assigned a 1. The same applies to On-Nation Populations. For the last two variables (Per Capita Income and Number of Tribal Agents), both are to be ranked lowest Income and Number of Agents with a 5 for the lowest values and 1 for the highest value. This is done to add more weight to these variables and put them in line with the first two.



Table 1. Decision Criteria:

Land Acres and Access	Assigned Points 5 for most 1 of least	On Nation Population	Assigned Points 5 for most 1 of least2	Per Capita Income (Lower the income higher the rank)	Assigned Points 1 for most 5 of least	Number of Current Tribal Agents	Assigned Points 1 for most 5 of least
500,000 ≥	5	50,000 ≥	5	\$35,672 ≥ U.S. Rate	1	5 +	1
200,000 to 499,999	4	30,000 to 49,999	4	\$30,000 to \$35,671	2	4 to 5	2
80,000 to 199,999	3	20,000 to 29,999	3	\$20,000 to \$29,999	3	2 to 3	3
30,000 to 79,999	2	10,000 to 19,999	2	\$10,000 to \$19,999	4	1	4
≤ 29,999	1	≤ 9,999	1	≤ \$9,999	5	0	5

Table 2. Example Six Tribes:

Tribe	Land	On Nation Population	Per Capita Income (Lower the income higher the rank)	# Of current Agent for Tribe
Tribe 1	1.69 Mil	15,313	\$10,198	0
Tribe 2	16,929	9,534	\$20,081	3
Tribe 3	3391	2,258	\$19,895	5
Tribe 4	404,005	12,995	\$31,660	1
Tribe 5	1.93 Mil	25,639	\$24,950	4
Tribe 6	31,748	7,848	\$12,446	0

Table 3. Final Ranking Based on Criteria:

Tribe	Rank High to Low	Land	On Nation Population	Per Capita Income (Lower the income higher the rank)	# Of current Agent for Tribe
Tribe 1	17	5	3	4	5
Tribe 5	14	5	4	3	2
Tribe 4	13	4	3	2	4
Tribe 6	13	2	2	4	5
Tribe 2	10	2	2	3	3
Tribe 3	7	1	1	4	1

Recommended sources for data:

Land Source: <https://nativeland.info/blog/dashboard/land-area-totals-for-us-native-lands/>

Tribe Names: <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/indiancountry/resources/reservation-profiles>

Population: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table>

Per Cap Income & Population: <https://censusreporter.org/>

EXHIBIT 1:

Indian Country Extension Commission Members

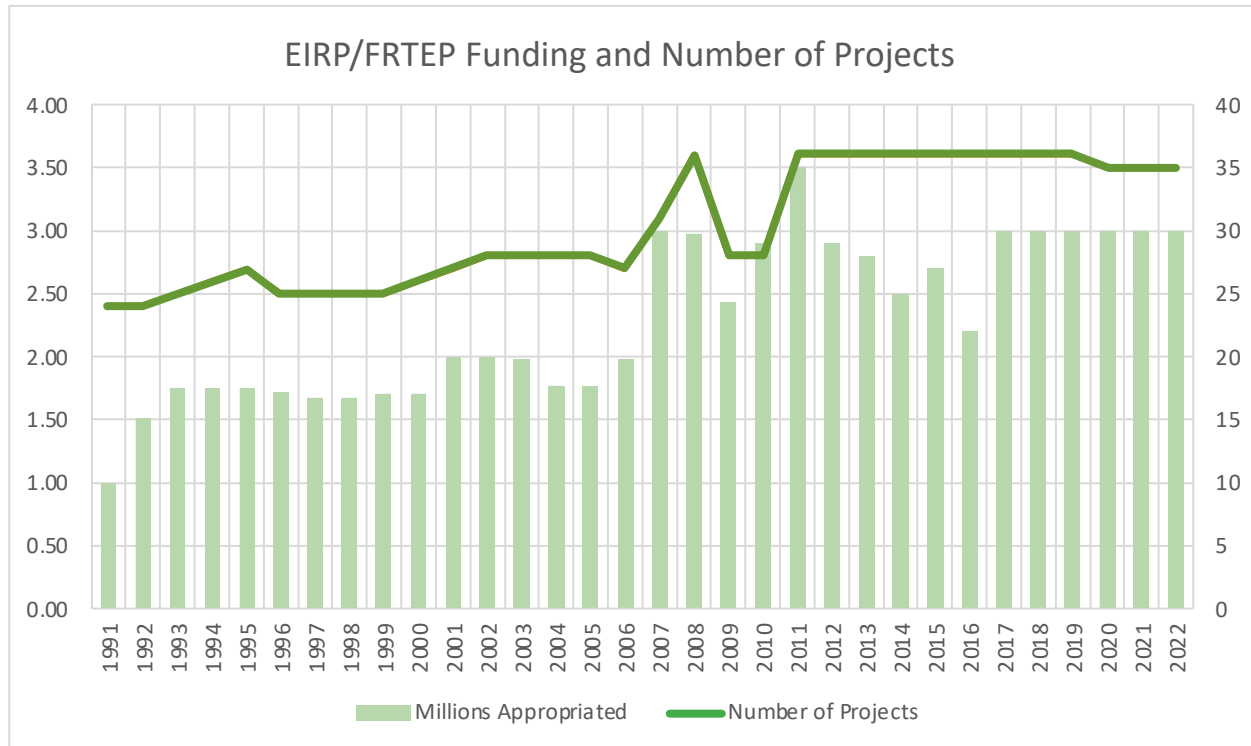
- Co-Chair Trent Teegerstrom, Associate Director Tribal Extension Programs, University of Arizona
- Co-Chair Jo Ann Warner, Associate Director, Western Extension Risk Management Education Center (Western Center), Washington State University
- Co-Chair Dr. Joe Hiller, Professor Emeritus, University of Arizona
- Ronald “Chumper” Walker, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians North Carolina Cooperative Extension and FRTEP Project Director
- Daniel L. Fagerlie, Washington State University Extension Tribal Liaison and Colville Reservation FRTEP
- Dr. Jeffrey Silvertooth, Professor and Former Dean of Extension, University of Arizona
- Virgil Dupuis, Extension Director, Salish Kootenai College
- Brian Kowalkowski, Dean of Education, College of Menominee Nation
- Karen R. Diver, Senior Advisor to the President, Native American Affairs, University of Minnesota
- Vicki Hebb, University of Nevada, Reno Extension, Agricultural Producer South Dakota Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation
- Staci Emm, University of Nevada, Reno Extension, Director of Mineral County Cooperative Extension and Nevada FRTEP Director, Walker River Paiute
- Esther Tate Kruse, Fiscal Officer/Management Analyst Agricultural Research Center, CAHNRS Office of Research, Washington State University
- Sarah Vogel J.D., Attorney, Author of “The Farmer’s Lawyer”
- Michel Melvin, Agricultural Producer, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota
- Dr. Doug Steel, Vice President of Food Agriculture and Natural Resources, Association of Public & Land Grant Universities (APLU)
- Cris Stainbrook, President, Indian Land Tenure Foundation

Commission Liaisons:

- Dr. William Hoffman, Chief of Staff, National Institute of Food and Agriculture
- Erin Riley, National Program Leader, Division of Community and Education, Institute of Youth, Family and Community-IYFC

APPENDIX

Table 4. Historical Funding and Number of Positions for the FRTEP 1991 to 2022



* Funding in Millions 0 to 4 and Number of Positions 0 to 40.

“As deadly as that virus was, they still provided services, they still provided programming, they still provided opportunities and they never let that get in the way of everyday life because we still have to get through all that... We are really grateful for that.”





“I think that’s really important that the FRTEP program is creating healthy relationships within our families, within our community. There’s a lot of hardships in the community so it’s really nice to have those happy moments to look forward to.”

Trent Teegerstrom

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